

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 BANGKO 11686 241036Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 L-03 NSC-05
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 AID-05 /084 W
-----038733 241449Z /64/43
R 240850Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3443

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BANGKOK 11686

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, TH
SUBJECT: LABOR DEVELOPMENTS

1. SUMMARY. DURING THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF APRIL, LABOR UNREST IN BANGKOK AREA DIMINISHED. RTG HAS INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO INCREASE PAY SCALES FOR LARGE NUMBERS OF NON-UNIONIZED GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AND IS COMPLETING STUDY ON MINIMUM WAGE RATES. FIVE PROMINENT THAI LABOR LEADERS ARE ATTENDING THE NINTH CONGRESS OF THE WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS IN PRAGUE, CZECHOSLOVAKIA. ON APRIL 17, 1978, THE TRIPARTITE NATIONAL LABOR DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL HELD ITS FIRST OFFICIAL MEETING. BITTER FEUDING HAS BROKEN OUT AMONG VARIOUS LABOR FACTIONS AND RTG OVER PLANS FOR MAY 1ST LABOR DAY CELEBRATION. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING TWO TENSE WEEKS AT END OF MARCH DURING WHICH SEVERAL STATE ENTERPRISE LABOR UNIONS CONDUCTED ILLEGAL STRIKES AND WORK ACTIONS AND OTHERS SUBMITTED NEGOTIATING DEMANDS TO MANAGEMENT, THE LABOR SITUATION IN THE BANGKOK AREA DURING THE FIRST THREE WEEKS IN APRIL HAS QUIETED DOWN. ON MARCH 30 LEADERS FROM THE MAJOR STATE ENTERPRISE UNIONS MET IN EMERGENCY SESSION AND REACHED GENERAL CONSENSUS TO AVOID ILLEGAL ACTIONS WHICH COULD PROVOKE HARSH RTG REACTION.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 BANGKO 11686 241036Z

ON RTG SIDE PRIME MINISTER KRIANGSAK CHAMANAN INSTRUCTED THE MANAGERS OF STATE ENTERPRISES TO DEVELOP CLOSER RAPPORT WITH WORKERS AND ACCEPT GRIEVANCES AND NEGOTIATING DEMANDS FOR DUE CONSIDERATION. WITH BOTH MANAGEMENT OF STATE ENTERPRISES AND LABOR ANXIOUS TO AVOID FURTHER CONFRONTATIONS, AN ACCOMMODATION WAS REACHED ON MARCH 30 IN STRIKE AT THAILAND TOBACCO MONOPOLY AND WALKOUTS PLANNED

FOR APRIL 1 WERE CANCELLED AT BOTH BANGKOK MASS TRANSIT AUTHORITY (BUS COMPANY) AND THE PROVINCIAL WATER SUPPLY DIVISION. SINCE THEN THERE HAVE BEEN NO FURTHER IMMEDIATE THREATS OF STRIKES OR WORK ACTIONS IN STATE ENTERPRISES.

3. IN RELATED DEVELOPMENTS, RTG HAS INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO ADJUST PAY SCALES FOR VARIETY OF NON-UNIONIZED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES INCLUDING JUDGES, PROSECUTORS, POLICE, MILITARY AND CIVIL SERVICE. IN ADDITION DAMRONG SUNTHORN SARATON, CHAIRMAN OF TRIPARTITE MINIMUM WAGE COMMITTEE, TOLD PRESS ON APRIL 7 THAT COMMITTEE WILL COMPLETE CURRENT COST OF LIVING STUDY AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON ADJUSTMENTS IN MINIMUM WAGE BY END OF APRIL. EARLIER SUNTHON KAEONET, PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER FOR LABOR CONGRESS OF THAILAND, WHICH INITIATED PRESENT DISCUSSION ON MINIMUM WAGE LAST MONTH BY CALLING ON RTG TO INCREASE RATES FOR BANGKOK AREA FROM 28 TO 45 BAHT PER DAY, URGED RTG TO HAVE NEW RATES TAKE EFFECT ON MAY 1 (THAI LABOR DAY) "AS GIFT TO ALL WORKERS."

4. ON APRIL 5, 1978, FIVE THAI LABOR LEADERS DEPARTED BANGKOK FOR PRAGUE TO ATTEND THE NINTH WORLD CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS (WFTU). FOUR OF THE FIVE ARE WORKER REPRESENTATIVES TO THE TRIPARTITE NATIONAL LABOR DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (NLDC): SUNTHON KAEONET, AMNAT NUJPRAPAJ, SANCHAN INTARO, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 BANGKO 11686 241036Z

AND PRICHA SIMISAP. THE FIFTH WORKER REPRESENTATIVE TO THE NLDC, PHAISAN THAWATCHAINAN, WAS INVITED BUT DECLINED THE INVITATION SAYING HE IS CURRENTLY TOO BUSY WITH MAY DAY PREPARATIONS. PHAISAN SENT WIRAWUT BOONMAKLEE, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE METROPOLITAN ELECTRICITY AUTHORITY WORKERS UNION, IN HIS PLACE. BEFORE THE DELEGATION DEPARTED BANGKOK, SUNTHON KAEONET TOLD PRESS THAT GROUP HAD REQUESTED AND RECEIVED PRIME MINISTER KRIANGSAK'S APPROVAL TO ATTEND WFTU CONGRESS.

COMMENT: AT PRESENT NO THAI LABOR UNION IS OFFICIALLY AFFILIATED WITH WFTU AND IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT ANY WILL. WHILE PRIME MINISTER HAS APPARENTLY GIVEN HIS APPROVAL FOR TRIP, WHICH MAY FIT PM'S FOREIGN POLICY STRATEGY OF EXPANDING CONTACTS WITH COMMUNIST WORLD, ATTENDANCE AT WFTU CONGRESS WILL NEVERTHELESS SUBJECT LABOR LEADERS TO CONSIDERABLE SUSPICION AND CRITICISM FROM ULTRA CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS IN ARMY, POLICE AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY. END COMMENT.

5. ON APRIL 17, 1978, THE TRIPARTITE NATIONAL LABOR DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (NLDC) HELD ITS FIRST OFFICIAL MEETING AND ELECTED RETIRED POLICE GENERAL PRASOET RUCHIRAWONG

AS CHAIRMAN AND FORMER LABOR DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR GENERAL THIAN ATCHAKUN AS VICE CHAIRMAN. WICHIT SAENGTHONG, WHO IS THE CURRENT LABOR DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR GENERAL BUT NOT ONE OF THE TEN OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE NLDC, WAS NAMED SECRETARY TO THE COUNCIL. AS FOUR OF THE FIVE WORKER REPRESENTATIVES WERE IN PRAGUE FOR THE WFTU CONGRESS, PHAISAN THAWATCHAINAN WAS THE ONLY WORKER REPRESENTATIVE TO ATTEND THE NLDC MEETING.

6. A BITTER DISPUTE HAS BROKEN OUT AMONG VARIOUS THAI LABOR FACTIONS AND BETWEEN RTG AND LABOR CONGRESS OF THAILAND (LCT) OVER PREPARATIONS FOR MAY 1ST LABOR DAY CELEBRATION. WHEN LCT PRESIDENT PHAISAN THAWATCHAINAN CALLED MEETING OF ALL LABOR LEADERS TO PLAN CELEBRATION, WICHIT SAENGTHONG, DIRECTOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 04 BANGKO 11686 241036Z

GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL), PREEMPTED ACTION BY CALLING SIMILAR MEETING ON APRIL 17 AT DOL AND TREATING LCT AS ONLY ONE OF FOUR COMPETING FACTIONS. AFTER HEATED ARGUMENTS BETWEEN PHAISAN AND ANUSAK BUNYAPRANAJ, LEADER OF THE RECENTLY REGISTERED NATIONAL FREE LABOR UNION CONGRESS, AND A PROPOSAL BY WICHIT FOR A JOINT ORGANIZING COMMITTEE TO PLAN MAY 1ST CELEBRATION, LEADERS OF LCT AND STATE RAILWAY OF THAILAND WORKERS UNION, WHICH GENERALLY SUPPORTS LCT, WALKED OUT OF MEETING. AT SUBSEQUENT RUMP MEETING OF LABOR LEADERS, WICHIT WAS NAMED CHAIRMAN OF ORGANIZING COMMITTEE. PHAISAN, WHO BOYCOTTED SECOND MEETING, HAS DECLINED OFFER TO BE ONE OF FOUR VICE-CHAIRMAN. IT IS UNCLEAR AT THIS TIME WHETHER OR NOT LCT WILL BOYCOTT OFFICIAL LABOR DAY ACTIVITIES AND TRY TO ORGANIZE SEPARATE CELEBRATION.

WHITEHOUSE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LABOR, UNION GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BANGKO11686
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780174-0713
Format: TEL
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780426/aaaaavil.tel
Line Count: 152
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: a3dcc9a8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2875308
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LABOR DEVELOPMENTS
TAGS: ELAB, TH
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/a3dcc9a8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014